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## **THESIS**

**THE UNITED STATES - RUSSIAN MILITARY  
COOPERATION IN IMPLEMENTATION FORCE  
OPERATIONS IN BOSNIA**

by

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December 1997

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**THE UNITED STATES - RUSSIAN MILITARY COOPERATION IN  
IMPLEMENTATION FORCE OPERATIONS IN BOSNIA**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

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## ABSTRACT

Yugoslavia's rapid disintegration amid violence and war in 1991 came as a shock to the outside world. The war was a result of an organized program of domestic conflict waged along ethno-cultural lines by a threaten powerful elite. The response of the international community has been marked by considerable confusion and inconsistency.

With most of the major obstacles that characterized the Cold War now removed, there seemed to be a more favorable environment for effective U.S.-Russian cooperation in matters of mutual interests in international security. This notwithstanding, the U.S.-led initiative to cooperate with Russia to find a lasting solution to the Bosnian crisis ran into impediments from the very onset. This thesis will argue that the causes of these impediments were rooted in Russia's domestic political and economic constraints, coupled with a nostalgia to exercise the leverage of a super-power over the Bosnian peace process.

The Balkans is only of secondary national interest to Russia and the United States. Nevertheless, the Balkans constitute an area of extensive interaction between the two countries. The Bosnian conflict offers a good case study for examining the causes of the impediments to U.S.-Russian cooperation.







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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## I. INTRODUCTION

Yugoslavia's rapid disintegration amid violence and war in 1991 came as a shock to the outside world. The shock was even more overwhelming because of the internal forces that triggered the conflict. The war was a result of an organized program of domestic conflict waged along ethno-cultural lines by a threatened powerful elite; an elite which embraced and subsequently nurtured a budding nationalist movement, deliberately and systematically manipulating and provoking it to create ethnic and cultural cleavages within the region. The response of the international community and its involvement in the conflict were driven by the fear that the fighting might spread beyond the borders of Yugoslavia, the humanitarian consequences of the war, and the need to show that aggression would not be tolerated under the new world order.

As the slaughter of Muslims mounted in Sarajevo and other Bosnian enclaves in 1992, the American administration came under heavy criticism for inaction. Similarly, the Russian government also remained passive. At the same time, demands were being made from within Russia on Moscow to take action to resolve the problem.

Meanwhile, in the new global political environment that resulted after the end of the Cold War, both the United States and Russia found themselves in a position to use force more selectively and with less risk. Both Russia and the United States now have

their important roles in the European security system. At the same time, neither Washington nor Moscow was under any compulsion to secure competitive ideological and other advantages.

## **II. THESIS STATEMENT**

With most of the major obstacles that characterized the Cold War now removed, there seemed to be a more favorable environment for effective U.S.-Russian cooperation in matters of mutual interests in international security. This notwithstanding, the U.S.-led initiative to cooperate with Russia to find a lasting solution to the Bosnian crisis ran into impediments from the very onset. This thesis will argue that the causes of these impediments were rooted in Russia's domestic political and economic constraints, coupled with a nostalgia to exercise the leverage of a super-power over the Bosnian peace process.

It is significant to note that the Balkans is only of secondary national interest to Russia and the United States. Consequently, the stakes in the region are insufficient to turn it into a main foreign policy focus. Nevertheless, the Balkans constitutes an area of extensive interaction and cooperation by the U.S. and Russia. The region, and in particular the Bosnian conflict, offers a good case study for examining the causes of the impediments to U.S.-Russian cooperation.

### III. CONCLUSIONS

International involvement in former Yugoslavia has been marked by considerable confusion and inconsistency. This reflects the lack of will of the international community to take the steps necessary to address the underlying causes of the conflict. The inconsistency of international involvement in the conflict was also evident from the disagreements between the actors about which goal should have top priority: containment of the conflict, delivery of humanitarian aid, or punishment of the aggressor. Hesitation over these issues appears to be one of the major obstacles to peace in Bosnia.

These differences were also characteristic features of U.S.-Russian interaction in the region. While both countries directed their efforts toward the same objective—to halt hostilities and restore peace, order, and stability in the region—they were in favour of different means and institutions with which to achieve their common goal. Russia opposed any decisive role by NATO in resolving the conflict. It also insisted on equal responsibility by all contending parties in the conflict, and consequently on enhanced use of the OSCE and UN capabilities as impartial peacekeepers. These guiding principles reflect Russia's unwillingness to address the fundamental causes of the conflict, in other words to recognize that the war was a result of an organized program of domestic conflict waged along ethno-cultural lines by the Serbian power elite. On the larger international scale, Moscow's policy reflects concern over American influence spreading, through NATO, into Southeastern Europe, a region perceived by Russia as historically linked to it. At the same time, developments in the Balkans showed many Russians that parity with

the U.S. no longer existed, and confirmed the diminishing political power of Russia on the international scene and the increasingly powerful position of the Americans. The profound national identity crisis brought about by the collapse of the Soviet Union resulted in Russians becoming more and more nostalgic for the Soviet past, when their country was, at least in their eyes, more powerful and wealthy. This rise of nationalist sentiment came as a response to the political and economic challenges Russian society faced. These were in turn reflected in Russia's foreign policy in general, and toward the Bosnian conflict in particular.

On the other hand, when the American administration involved itself fully in the conflict resolution effort, it did it with real determination, employing clear strategic goals and linking diplomacy and enforcement. In this way the major cause for the failure of the negotiations over Bosnia, the lack of credible threat of force, was overcome. This was done by the unique partnership between the UN and NATO. The former afforded legitimacy to international action, but lacked military resources to ensure success. The latter possessed significant military force, but lacked legitimacy outside its original framework. This partnership was not achieved without difficulties, due to the different, almost opposing, philosophies, institutional cultures, and procedures of the two organizations. By reconciling those differences, the U.S. asserted its position as a leading actor in world affairs, and as the real power broker in the Balkans.

Therefore, the impediments which were encountered at the beginning of the U.S.-Russian military cooperation in IFOR were rooted in Russia's domestic political and



economic constraints. The special arrangements that were made for Russian troops to participate in the NATO-led mission were due to the understanding of those domestic political constraints, and the will of the U.S. administration not to exclude or ostracize Russia from the international political scene. On the other hand, it has been widely recognized that relations with the Russian troops in IFOR have been excellent, and this has made the American military optimistic about the potential for future U.S.-Russian joint peacekeeping operations. The political strains did not prevent these two countries from successfully addressing regional conflicts to enhance global security and stability. However, given the current political, economic, and social situation in Russia, similar strains in U.S.-Russian military cooperation are likely to persist, and a lot of good will and effort will be needed to sustain mutual confidence and consensus building.





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## I. INTRODUCTION

Yugoslavia's rapid disintegration amid violence and war in 1991 came as a shock to the outside world. The shock was even more overwhelming because of the internal forces that triggered the conflict. The war was a result of an organized program of domestic conflict waged along ethno-cultural lines by a threatened powerful elite; an elite which embraced and subsequently nurtured a budding nationalist movement, deliberately and systematically manipulating and provoking it to create ethnic and cultural cleavages within the region.<sup>1</sup> The response of the international community and its involvement in the conflict were driven by the fear that the fighting might spread beyond the borders of Yugoslavia, the humanitarian consequences of the war, and the need to show that aggression would not be tolerated under the new world order.

As the slaughter of Muslims mounted in Sarajevo and other Bosnian enclaves in 1992, the American administration came under heavy criticism for inaction. Similarly, the Russian government also remained passive. At the same time, demands were being made from within Russia on Moscow to take action to resolve the problem.

Meanwhile, in the new global political environment that resulted after the end of the Cold War, both the United States and Russia found themselves in a position to use force more selectively and with less risk. Both Russia and the United States now have

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<sup>1</sup> For a complete development of this argument see: V. P. Gagnon, "Ethnic Nationalism and International Conflict: The Case of Serbia," *International Security*, Vol. 19, no. 3, Winter 1994-95, pp. 130-166

their important roles in the European security system. At the same time neither Washington nor Moscow was under any compulsion to secure competitive ideological and other advantages.

With most of the major obstacles that characterized the Cold War now removed, there seemed to be a more favorable environment for effective U.S.-Russian cooperation in matters of mutual interests in international security. This notwithstanding, the U.S.-led initiative to cooperate with Russia to find a lasting solution to the Bosnian crisis ran into impediments from the very onset. This thesis will argue that the causes of these impediments were rooted in Russia's domestic political and economic constraints coupled with a nostalgia to exercise the leverage of a super-power over the Bosnian peace process.

It is significant to note that the Balkans is only of secondary national interest to Russia and the United States. Consequently, the stakes in the region are insufficient to turn it into a main foreign policy focus. Nevertheless, the Balkans constitutes an area of extensive interaction and cooperation by the U.S. and Russia in an effort to resolve the conflict in that region. The region, and in particular the Bosnian conflict, offers a good case study for examining the causes of the impediments to U.S.-Russian cooperation. This thesis will first assess the causes of the conflict in former Yugoslavia and Bosnia, in particular, then the Russian involvement in the international community peace effort and its interaction with the U.S. throughout the crisis, from 1991 till December 1995, and

offer its general conclusions about the possible future U.S.-Russian military cooperation and partnership.





## II. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

After the recent radical change in the bipolar strategic environment that resulted from the demise of Communism, a fragmentation of power has occurred. This has led to instability and insecurity throughout the Balkans and particularly in Yugoslavia. But still, Yugoslavia's rapid disintegration amid violence and war in 1991 came as a shock to the outside world. The forces that triggered the conflict are still debatable. To some observers, the war was a result of a rational program of domestic conflict waged along ethno-cultural lines brought about by a threatened powerful elite; an elite that embraced and subsequently nurtured a budding nationalist movement, deliberately and systematically manipulating and provoking it to create ethnic and cultural cleavages within the region.<sup>2</sup> According to Gagnon's "instrumentalist approach,"<sup>3</sup> the strategy adopted by the ruling elites to define a threat to the community in ethno-nationalistic terms, appears to be a response to a shift in the structure of domestic political and economic power.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> See, for example, V. P. Gagnon, pp. 130-166; Warren Zimmermann, *Origins of a Catastrophe*, (Random House, Inc., New York, 1996); International Commission on the Balkans, *Unfinished Peace: Report of the International Commission on the Balkans*, Foreword by Leo Tindemans, (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington D.C., 1996); Vesna Pesic, "The Cruel Face of Nationalism," *Journal of Democracy*, October 1996, pp. 100-103.

<sup>3</sup> This is one of the three broad approaches to the study of ethnicity and ethnic conflict, as described by David A. Lake and Donald Rothchild in "Ethnic Fears and Global Engagement: The International Spread and Management of Ethnic Conflict," *Policy Paper #20*, (Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation), January 1996, p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> V. P. Gagnon, p.

To others, the country's disintegration can be attributed to the rise of ethnic-nationalist leadership, not only in Serbia but in Croatia, Bosnia, and Slovenia; and to the role of the Western influence for creating internal fragmentation by cultural, economic, financial, and political means.<sup>5</sup> Regardless of the differences, all observers recognize that the wars of Yugoslav succession involved ethno-nationalism as a basis for competing claims for self-determination. Consequently, the question that arises is why the ruling elites had the opportunity to choose and subsequently implement the strategy of "ethnic conflict"? Why was it possible for them to create a political context in which ethno-nationalism appeared to be the only politically relevant identity, and to use it as a tool to obtain their ends?

#### **A. CAUSES FOR THE CONFLICT**

The primary difference among the cultures in this region (Serbs, Croats, and Bosnia-Herzegovians) is religion, since all the conflicting parties belong to the Southern Slav group and speak the same language.<sup>6</sup> Thus, religion appears to be a major element of national identity. Bosnia is located in a region of transition between Western Christianity, Eastern Orthodoxy, and Islam. But the recent conflict has occurred in a largely secularized society where religious practices, though declining steadily for the last half a

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<sup>5</sup> Susan Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution After the Cold War*, (The Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C., 1995), pp. 148-162

<sup>6</sup> International Commission on the Balkans, *Unfinished Peace: Report of the International Commission on the Balkans*, p.16, see also Noel Malcolm, *Bosnia: A Short History*, (New York University Press, New York, 1994), p. 102.

century, have almost always been tolerant towards one another. The secular worldview which was developed in the twentieth century by the Muslim population of Bosnia was due to the eclectic and moderate version of Islam, called “Bectasiism,” which was practiced by the Turcomans who migrated to the region after Bosnia was subjected to the Ottoman Empire in 1463<sup>7</sup>. The Ottoman administration was moderated by the “millet” system, which introduced some degree of religious toleration in the region. The non-Muslims had the opportunity to organize and develop their own religious and educational institutions under the leadership of their churches. At the same time the Church had administrative functions to represent the community before the Sultan<sup>8</sup>.

Even in the middle ages (1200-1400), one can see that religious practices were also permeated with tolerance. During that period Bosnia’s population was entirely Christian but there was not one Christian Church but three. While most Bosnians were Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodoxy and a schismatic local Bosnian Church also had adherents. It should be pointed out that all three Churches were organizationally weak, their clergy largely uneducated, and none of them could count on steady state prerogatives<sup>9</sup> (these factors, combined with socioeconomic ones, later contributed to the decision by a large number of the Bosnian population to abandon Christianity for Islam). Intermarriage rates were quite high in those ethnically mixed regions and sociological

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<sup>7</sup> Ali L. Karaosmanoglu, “Crisis in the Balkans,” *Research Paper #22*, (United Nations, New York, 1993), p. 2.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>9</sup> Noel Malcolm, pp. 14-18.

polling during 1989-90 showed high levels of tolerance.<sup>10</sup> Thus religion as such can not be regarded as the primary motif that has divided people under different nationalistic banners.

## **1. Introduction of the Principle of Nationalities**

The principle of nationalities was introduced in the Balkans by external powers during the Nineteenth Century and became a major factor of conflictual behavior. The massive application of this principle coupled with the policies of external powers to exploit regional conditions in order to expand their spheres of influence further aggravated this conflictual environment. A product of Western civilization generally, this principle was introduced into a region where non-territorial, economically interdependent, and culturally mixed ethnic groups coexisted. As a result, the establishment of nation-states in this part of Europe required massive reallocation of peoples from different ethnic groups to their respective new “homelands.” This resettlement was often accompanied with extensive use of force and violence between different ethnic groups.<sup>11</sup>

By the mid-nineteenth century, Bosnia was the westernmost border of the remnants of the Ottoman Empire. To its west and north was the Habsburg Monarchy. To

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<sup>10</sup> V. P. Gognan, cites *Demografska statistika* (Belgrade: savezni zavod za statistiku, 1979-89) and Randy Hodson, Garth Massey, and Dusko Sekulic, “National Tolerance in the Former Yugoslavia,” *Global Forum Series Occasional Papers*, #93-01.5 (Durham, NC: Center for International Studies, Duke University, Dec. 1993).

<sup>11</sup> Ali L. Karaosmanoglu, cites Arnold Toynbee, *The Western Question in Greece and Turkey*, (London: Constable, 1922), p. 3.



the east lay Serbia, which has already gained its autonomy by a revolt during the first part of the nineteenth century. In 1875, a revolt, which started as a peasants' uprising against the abuses of Muslim landlords, broke out. It soon spread throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. In spite of its social nature, some of the uprising's leaders soon expressed a desire for political union with Serbia. This resulted in Serbian and Montenegrin declaration of war against the Ottoman Empire in 1876. After their defeat by the Turkish army, Russia entered the war on the Serbian side. By the spring of 1878, Russian troops had advanced to the outskirts of Istanbul. At this point the Great Powers, namely Britain and France, intervened politically, afraid of big Russian gains at Ottoman expense. The Peace Treaty of San Stefano from March 1878 which created a huge Bulgaria, presumed to be a Russian puppet state, was not recognized by the Great Powers. So they convened a meeting in Berlin in June 1878 in an effort to reestablish the European balance of power. The parties in the Berlin Congress agreed on recasting the map of the Balkans. Bulgaria was reduced in size and Bosnia and Herzegovina was given to the Habsburg Monarchy in order to protect the Austro-Hungarian interests in that part of Europe.<sup>12</sup> Though the religious differences among Muslims, Orthodox Christians, and Catholics, during that period were already well established in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the roots of the 1875 uprising were mostly social at the beginning, aimed against the Bosnian Muslim

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<sup>12</sup> For the full story of recasting the Balkan's map after the demise of the Ottoman Empire and resettlement of peoples see: Robert J. Donia and John V. A. Fine, Jr., *Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Tradition Betrayed*, (Columbia University Press, New York, 1994), pp. 75-112.

landowning class, and just later on, in the course of the fighting, shifted towards political—for a fight for autonomy and unification with Serbia.

During the Austro-Hungarian rule the already existing social structure was retained—the leading position of the Muslim landowning class. But a great influx of Catholics from the monarchy, most of them Slavs, diluted the Muslims' dominance in the cities and the towns throughout the country. Austrian policies towards the principal ethno-national groups in Bosnia, as described by Robert Donia and John Fine, Jr., went through three phases. The promotion of the notion of Bosnianism, which encouraged patriotic loyalty to Bosnia itself as an alternative to separate Croatian, Serbian, or Muslim identities. This policy encouraged the revival of religious hierarchies and the growth of religious education, and romanticized Bosnia's unique history and cultural traditions. But the identification with ethno-religious communities was already too advanced for the Bosnians to renounce their ethnic identity in favor of regional patriotism. So these religious hierarchies appeared frequently as catalysts for ethnically based political movements which challenged Austrian government policies.

In the second phase, the Austrian authorities gradually liberalized their policies and began to tolerate political activities and expression. During this period—1903-1914—Bosnians were permitted to form political parties and to use publicly the names of their respective nationalities. The last phase started in 1914 and lasted until the

monarchy's collapse in 1918. During it, the Austrian authorities repressed the Bosnian Serbs because of the suspicion that they could undermine the Austrian state in wartime.<sup>13</sup>

With the approach of the end of WW I and the impending defeat of the Central Powers by the allies, the principle of nationalities was once again introduced to the Balkans. European allies and America "became enamored with the notion of national self determination and hoped to make it the overarching principle of any peace accord."<sup>14</sup> Moreover, most politically conscious Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, welcomed the approach of South Slav unification. But nevertheless, this unity, the hopes for which were embodied in the Corfu Declaration of July 1917,<sup>15</sup> meant different things to the different parties. The Serbs conceived the new independent South Slav unity as the fulfillment of their dream of a Greater Serbia, more so that Bosnia would become an integral part of it. For the Croats and Slovenes, this new entity was perceived as a partnership of equals with a federalist structure. In Bosnia, the future of the state was seen as a resolution of the still lingering agrarian question between the Muslim landowning class and Serb and Croat peasants.

In November 1918, social tensions in the region reached a point where the provincial government was compelled to invite Serbian troops to quell the disorders. Though the troops were met in Sarajevo as liberators, the Serbian army actually occupied many of the former Habsburg territories and Serbian officials were quick to follow and

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., pp. 97-100.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 120.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 120.



began replacing Bosnian Muslims in key positions in Bosnia. Thus the newly proclaimed “Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes,” though meant to be a democratic parliamentary monarchy along the lines envisaged in the Corfu Declaration, in many respects was a triumph of Serbian predominance.

During WW II, ethnic variety in the region emerged as a major factor of conflict. This was further aggravated by the policies of external powers which skillfully exploited regional conditions for the purposes of extension of their spheres of influence. The war in Yugoslavia was not just against the German aggressor and his allies, but also has other dimensions. Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany sponsored the creation of a Croatian puppet state which incorporated almost the whole territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This was the arena on which gross atrocities were committed against the Serbs by the fascist Ustasha regime and its collaborators, the Muslims. The Muslims were viewed by the regime as Croats who had converted to Islam during the Ottoman empire for social and economic reasons. The third dimension of the war “became a struggle for a revolutionary social transformation, since the Communist Party of Tito and his Partisans espoused an ideology that advocated an end to the old order.”<sup>16</sup>

It was during the war that the ideas for this new order were developed by Tito. Josip Broz-Tito was born in 1892 at Kumrovec of a Croatian father and a Slovenian mother. He was designated as first secretary of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia in 1937 and under his leadership the Party became an effective revolutionary underground

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 136, also Noel Malcolm, pp. 174-178.

force by the time of the German invasion in 1941. His ideas about the new order were heavily influenced by the Soviet nationality model—full national self-determination for Yugoslavia’s nationalities combined with strongly centralized Party organization that would be the only political expression of each nation’s will. Constitutionally and legally, the rights of each nation would be respected and they would have the theoretical right to secede from the state. As the sole legitimate representation of the popular will, the Communist Party was supposed to maintain a centrally imposed discipline that would assure that no nationality would ever exercise that right. This discrepancy between rights and obligations was central to the fragmentation of the state after the Communist Party lost its monopolistic role in Yugoslavia in the early 1990s.

Specifically, the Communist Party’s nationality policy asserted that the nations of Yugoslavia were distinct and should be treated equally. The slogan of the Partisans, “Brotherhood and Unity,” became the core of their vision for the after war years. The party recognized only five constituent nations—Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Macedonians, and Montenegrins—and Tito proposed to create a federal structure made up of separate republics, for each of these five key nationalities, with Bosnia and Herzegovina being a sixth federal unit. The proposal reflected the crucial significance of the Muslim’s support to the Partisans, since the bulk of their operations was centered in the Bosnian mountains. The ethnic foundation on which the Yugoslav republics were placed, was the result of the wartime need for popular support against the aggressor.

From the war, Yugoslavia emerged as having largely liberated itself from the Axis occupation by a widely popular indigenous resistance movement. Tito and the Yugoslav Communist Party capitalized on this achievement in their consolidation of power in 1945 and after. The “Tito’s era,” which ended in 1980 with his death, was a very interesting one. While imitating the Soviet example in state and nation building, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia tried also to follow more independent course. This resulted in increasing the tensions between the Soviet and Yugoslav Communist Parties and the subsequent expulsion of Yugoslavia from the Cominform in 1948. From that moment on, Yugoslavia followed the course of non-alignment in its foreign policy. This developments increased the strategic importance of the country for the West. Also a lot of foreign investments were attracted which sponsored the economic boom but on the other hand increased the demand for radical restructuring of the Yugoslav political and economic system, which in the early 1960s proved to be dysfunctional. As a result, the party control of the economic affairs was decentralized which consequently meant that almost all decision-making was given to the republics. At the macro-political level the reform decentralized the federation. This also included a loosening of party control of society which included more open expression of national sentiments. However, all major attempts at solving or reformulating the national problem in Yugoslavia through a democratic process failed.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> For a more complete discussion of the attempts at decentralizing the federation in the 1960s see V. P. Gagnon, Jr., pp. 142-145

Though Yugoslavia's 1974 Constitution shifted considerable power for decision-making from the center to the republics, this did neither help the unification of the country as a whole nor did it help to promote any democratic solution to the national problem. On the contrary, this shift amplified the division of the federation along ethno-national lines. As a by-product of decentralization, the republics gained a lot of power and came to be identified in each case with a particular national viewpoint, the only exception being Bosnia. This resulted in a power void at the center on which Slobodan Milosevic capitalized, after Tito's death.

It can be argued that this "Tito's approach" towards the solution of the national question resembles to a great extent the principle of nationalities that had been already introduced in the region. The only difference is that this time it has not been done by external forces and this made it appear more legitimate. The "rebirth" of the Yugoslav federation was done on the wave of enormous public support coupled with fierce repression against those who held different from the Communist view about the new radical changes which were brought to the Yugoslav society by the victory of the Partisans. Other important consequences from the war were the preponderant Serbian influence in the officer corps of Yugoslav People's Army which appeared as a result of the Serbian ascendancy in the Partisan command structure,<sup>18</sup> and the increased importance of Bosnia as a focal point of post-war munitions production in Yugoslavia.

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<sup>18</sup> Robert J. Donia and John V. A. Fine, Jr., p. 208.



From this historical overview it becomes evident that conflict does not appear as an inherent feature or characteristic of the Balkan peoples. It has been the excessive application of the principle of nationalities coupled with authoritarian power structure that turned the ethnic variety of the region into a major factor of conflict.

## **2. Ethno-Nationalism and Authoritarian Political Power**

The sociologist Anthony Smith describes a three-step process by which ethnic groups could be mobilized along ethnonationalistic lines and used by political elites for achieving their ends. As William Durch and James Schear argue, this three-step process “roughly describes the march of events in Serbia and among Serb populations in the other republics of the former Yugoslavia through the 1980s and early 1990s.”<sup>19</sup> The first step in this process is “the purification of culture” which encompasses the rediscovery of memories, symbols, which are then reappropriated. In other words, “the people must be encouraged to take possession of their authentic vernacular heritage and their genuine ethno-history.” This is a task for the intellectuals. The second step is “the universalization of chosenness”--the politicization of this rediscovered heritage. By emphasizing the uniqueness of the nation features, nationalism encourages the people to see themselves as “chosen,” that is, “as having a special cultural task in the world’s moral economy, one that no other human group can perform.” This task is for the nationalistic leaders. The last

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<sup>19</sup> William J. Durch and James A. Schear, “Faultlines: UN Operations in the Former Yugoslavia,” in William J. Durch eds., *UN Peacekeeping, American Policy and the Uncivil Wars of the 1990s*, (St. Martin’s Press, New York, 1996), p. 195.

step is “the territorialization of memory”, in order to nationalize shared memories, one have to attach them to “specific places and definite territories.” This “sanctification” of national historic sites, sacred mountains, rivers, tombs, etc. makes them so important to the ethnic groups, “turning them into contested zones where rival ethnic title-deeds have resulted in protracted conflicts.” This last task is to be performed by the soldiers<sup>20</sup>.

The first step towards “vernacular mobilization” has been taken by the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts with the publishing of its Memorandum in 1986. It is considered to be the manifesto of Greater Serbia nationalism. This document argued that the Serbs were placed in such an unfair position after the end of WW II, that their very existence was threatened. It also showed them as victims of economic and political discrimination policies conducted by Croats and Slovenes against them. It stated that:

“Except during the period of the NDH (the Independent State of Croatia, proclaimed in 1941 by the pro-Nazi Ustashe), Serbs in Croatia have never been as endangered as they are today. The resolution of their national status must be a top priority political question. If a solution is not found, the consequences will be damaging on many levels, not only for relations within Croatia but also for all of Yugoslavia.”<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> All citations from Anthony D. Smith, “Culture, Community, and Territory: the Politics of Ethnicity and Nationalism,” *International Affairs*, no. 3, 1996, pp. 445-458.

<sup>21</sup> Laura Silber and Allan Little, *Yugoslavia, Death of a Nation*, (Penguin USA, 1996), citing The Memorandum, p.64, pp. 35-36.

“The physical, political, legal, and cultural genocide of the Serbian population in Kosovo and Metohija is the worst defeat in all the Serbian-led battles of liberation from Orasac in 1804 to the 1941 uprising.”<sup>22</sup>

In fact this Memorandum appeared after problems in the autonomous province of Kosovo which had arisen in 1981. In this impoverished region, the Albanians, who account for about 90% of its population, began to express their grievances against the Serbian rule. In 1987-9 Serbs living in this region were proclaimed to be under threat and this was used as justification for the use of the Yugoslav People's Army in solving the problem. Kosovo has been the cradle of the medieval Serbian state. The famous Kosovo Polje battle between the Serbian and Ottoman armies in 1389 had taken place there. It also contains many Orthodox churches and monasteries. All these factors make the province a cultural and spiritual center for the Serbs and greatly contribute to the Serbian collective memory which is the basis for building a Serbian state on ethno-nationalistic foundations.

The crisis there also provided “the springboard for Slobodan Milosevic's 1987 campaign for the leadership of Serbia's Communist Party.”<sup>23</sup> While Tito had promoted equality among different ethnic group and based his solution of the Yugoslav national problem on the concept that no nationality felt any fear for its existence, Serbian nationalists in general, and Milosevic in particular, began to introduce fear as a basic

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<sup>22</sup> International Commission on the Balkans, citing the Memorandum, p. 25.

<sup>23</sup> William J. Durch and James A. Schear, p. 195.



policy respecting inter-ethnic relations. This policy was facilitated by the availability of a fighting arm in the form of the Yugoslav People's Army (YPA), whose officer corps was formed primarily of Serbs. What Slobodan Milosevic actually tried to do was to recentralize the political power in Serbia. The first step towards this goal was made at the expense of Kosovo and Vojvodina in 1988 when their political leaderships were forced to resign and were replaced by pro-Milosevic appointees. Montenegro experienced the same fate during the next year. In 1989 the Serbian republic changed its constitution and made Kosovo and Vojvodina constituent parts of Serbia which led to the abolition of their respective governments in favor of central rule from Belgrade.<sup>24</sup> By these acts the already incumbent president of Serbia, Milosevic gained control of the Federal Presidency by securing four of the eight votes.

The next year, 1990, an extraordinary congress of the League of the Communists in Yugoslavia (LCY) was held as a last effort for achieving any political consensus. Instead of this the LCY was dissolved after the Croat's representatives walked out because their proposals for turning Yugoslavia into looser federation or confederation were not accepted. In this way a complete decentralization of political authority was reached. During the period April-December the same year, for the first time in Yugoslavia's post-WW II period, multiparty elections took place in each of the six republics (Serbia, Slovenia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Croatia, and Bosnia). Nationalistic candidates won decisively in each of the republics. Nevertheless, these elections provided

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<sup>24</sup> Robert J. Donia and John V. A. Fine, Jr., p. 205.

the newly elected leaders with considerable political legitimacy while they delegitimized the federation. Thus, shifting the power and legitimacy to the republics cleared the stage for secession.

Though the elections were regarded as free by outside observers, the state-controlled media secured one-sided advantage for Milosevic's Socialist Party in Serbia, so it won two-thirds majority in the parliament. The same trend has been followed in the other constituent republics, in Croatia--the nationalist Franjo Tudjman, in Bosnia-- the three parties that won 86% of the parliament seats were organized on nationalistic bases, the Bosnian Serbs Serbian Democratic Party (SDP)--72 seats, the Bosnian Croats Croatian Democratic Community--44 seats, and the Bosnian Muslims Party for Democratic Action--86 seats.<sup>25</sup>

After the elections Croatia and Macedonia changed their constitutions in such a way that they actually divided their citizens into two groups. The dominant ethnic group of the republic provides concessions to the minority groups.<sup>26</sup>

At the same time the Federal Presidency was already dysfunctional. The election of the Croat Stipe Mesic as its head in May 1991 was deadlocked due to the Serbian control of four of the eight votes (five were needed). Though in July the European Community urged the parties into compliance with the Federal Presidency rules to give

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 210.

<sup>26</sup> International Commission on the Balkans, p. 31.

the mandate to Stipe Mesic in hopes to preserve alive some form of Yugoslav federacy, the deadlock has already rendered this institution unworkable.<sup>27</sup>

## **B. THE CONFLICT**

After the elections in 1990, Slovenia and Croatia faced the possibility of being dominated by Serbia and became increasingly less interested in remaining as constituent parts of former Yugoslavia. They both opted either for a much looser federation or complete independence. Serbia and Montenegro opposed any changes in the system. The other two republics, Macedonia and Bosnia were somewhere in the middle. Being the most ethnically mixed establishments in former Yugoslavia, Macedonia and Bosnia feared that a break-up of the federal state could bring civil war and partition their lands. Their leaders wanted to preserve federal Yugoslavia, but at the same time were anxious about possible Serbian domination. The subsequent developments in Bosnia followed a chain of violent events which were recognized by Europe and the US as likely to cause dramatic conflict.

The descent into war came as a result of several occurrences: the annexationist ambitions of the nationalistic Serbian and Croatian governments on the expense of Bosnia; the changed mission of the YPA from an Yugoslav federative military, intervening to preserve the state unity, into an instrument of Serbian nationalists;

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<sup>27</sup> Robert J. Donia and John V. A. Fine, p. 214.

strengthening of ethno-nationalistic sentiments of the Bosnian Serbs due to Serbian success in the Croatian conflict and the establishment of the Republic of Serbska Krajina, coupled with weakening of those willing to preserve Bosnia as a multi ethnic state; fears expressed by the Bosnian leaders about future Serbian domination; and last but not least, the indecisive and ineffective effort made by the international community to prevent, manage, and resolve the crisis.

After the elections in 1990, which were won by nationalistic leaders in all of the republics, and the break-up of the federal presidency in March 1991, Yugoslavia descended on the path of disintegration. The intentions of Serbia were already well formulated by its authoritarian nationalistic leader Slobodan Milosevic, who had stated that “Serbs would live in one state.”<sup>28</sup>

At the same time in Bosnia the Bosnian Croats were represented by a single political party, the Croatian Democratic Community (CDC). This party consisted of two factions with distinctly different views about Bosnia’s future. The first one, headed by Stjepan Kljuic, was pro-Bosnian. It supported the preservation of Bosnia as an unified multiethnic state. The second one was headed by Mate Boban and favored annexation by Croatia of those parts of Bosnia with a significant number of Croatian population. The same view was favored by Croatia’s president Franjo Tudjman, so the second faction enjoyed his support. Tudjman’s personal commission to Bosnia’s partition along ethnic lines culminated in March 1991 when he and Milosevic met to negotiate in general the

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<sup>28</sup> Laura Silber and Allan Little, p. 131.



terms of that partition.<sup>29</sup> These Serb's and Croat's nationalistic intentions undermined later on the relations between Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Croats. The tensions created between them escalated in 1993 into open conflict.

Another event that fostered the conflict in Bosnia was the changed role of YPA. Serbian nationalistic leaders began using the federal army as their major instrument to suppress unrest early as 1981 in the province of Kosovo. In James Gow's article "One Year of War in Bosnia and Herzegovina," the author analyzes the role of the Yugoslav military in the conflicts and concludes that "the role played by the military in the break-up of former Yugoslavia was crucial: it made the difference between widespread unrest and war."<sup>30</sup> There were some initial miscalculations concerning the involvement of the federal army in their effort to preserve the Yugoslav state. After the reassessments made by top military leaders and published in "Vojno Delo" in October 1991, it was decided that the army could "launch an armed campaign, linking up with proponents of Serbian ethnonational identity to secure the borders of a new state as well as vital strategic assets and resources."<sup>31</sup> These reassessments were based on the belief that the international community would not come to an unanimous agreement concerning the way it should respond to the crisis. Lacking the US leadership, the Western European Union would be

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid. p. 131., see also Robert J. Donia and John V. A. Fine, Jr., p. 249.

<sup>30</sup> James Gow, "One Year of War in Bosnia and Herzegovina," *RFE/RL Research Report*, Vol. 2, No. 23, June 1993, p. 1.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 1.

reluctant to involve militarily in the conflict, so the YPA could carry its operations untroubled.<sup>32</sup>

Indeed, the Western response to the crisis was ineffective. In 1991 the Persian Gulf war had just ended. In the US President Bush was in the middle of a reelection campaign preparations and at the same time was heavily criticized for ignoring the US domestic affairs. So, the responsibility for the crisis was turned to the European countries. The macro political picture during this period in Europe was also quite colorful. Germany had just reunified and the Maastricht Treaty was fast approaching. Western policies were initially centered on trying to preserve the Yugoslav unity, fearing that its disintegration could give a dangerous precedent to the republics heading for independence from the former USSR.

The republic of Slovenia was the first to break away in June 25, 1991. Slovenia was not only the richest, but the most ethnically homogenous republic. Its population was over 90% Slovenian. This was one of the primary reasons for which Milosevic readily acquiesced to Slovenia's secession, no Serbs were actually living there.

Croatia was the second republic that declared independence on the same date and the minor skirmishes of Serbs and Croats escalated into war between the Croats and rebel Serbs supported by the YPA. Due to the support of the sizable Serbian minority living there, the YPA operations turned out to be more successful. The Republic of Serbska Kraina was established along the borders with Bosnia and substantial parts of Eastern

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 6.



Slavonia, adjacent to the Serbian border were carved out. On the other hand the newly elected Croatian government changed the republic's constitution and defined the Serbs living there as a minority thus excluding or marginalizing them from the status and privileges shared by the major national group.<sup>33</sup> Also the situation gained urgency for the Serbs when Germany, supported by the Vatican, vocally pushed for the Western countries and especially the EU to recognize Slovenia and Croatia, which was done in January, 15th, 1992. Shortly before that, on November, 23rd, 1991, the UN, in the persons of Cyrus Vance and Lord Peter Carrington, chairman of the European Union Conference on former Yugoslavia, brokered a cease-fire that cleared the way for deployment of peacekeeping troops there, the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR).

While the war raged in Croatia, the Bosnia government, originally supportive of maintaining Yugoslavian unity, but not eager to remain in it once the ethnic balance has been altered by the break-away of Croatia and Slovenia, opted for a referendum on the issue of secession. The Bosnian Serbs boycotted the referendum and their leaders announced that they would oppose secession through armed resistance.<sup>34</sup> The other two major nationalities in Bosnia, Croats and Muslims, voted unanimously for independence in the referendum that was held in February, 29th through March, 1st. On March, 3rd the republic of Bosnia declared its independence and was recognized by the West in April, 6th, 1992.

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<sup>33</sup> International Commission on the Balkans, p. 31.

<sup>34</sup> Laura Silber and Allan Little, p. 218.

The population of Bosnia consisted primarily of three distinct groups, Muslims, Serbs, and Croats. The Bosnian Muslim made up 43.7%, the Serbs, 31.4%, and the Bosnian Croats, 17.3%. There were also 5.5% of “Yugoslavs”, descendants of mixed marriages.<sup>35</sup> The Serbs were mostly farmers and lived primarily in the rural areas. The Muslims and Croats were concentrated in the towns and cities. By the end of March 1992, nationalistic groups from all three of these ethnic groups began fighting each other.

The Bosnian Croats were armed by the government of Croatia. The Serb nationalists, led by the Bosnian Serb President Radovan Karadzic, were armed by the YPA and often assisted by it. The Croats initially fought the Karadzic Serbs alongside the Bosnian Army, which consisted mostly of Muslims but also included small numbers of Serbs and Croats. All of the three belligerent parties were engaged in campaigns of “ethnic cleansing.” Nevertheless, it should be stressed that the Bosnian Serbs were the first to perform these atrocities. On April, 7th, 1992 the Security Council of the UN decided to authorize the “earliest full deployment of UNPROFOR, and appeals to all parties and others concerned in Bosnia and Herzegovina to cooperate with the efforts of the European Community to bring about a cease-fire and negotiated political solution.”<sup>36</sup> With its next Resolution 752, from May 15th, 1992, the UN Security Council demanded that all units of YPA and elements of the Croatian Army either be withdrawn from the republic, or disarmed, or subjected to the authority of the government of Bosnia and

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<sup>35</sup> International Commission on the Balkans, p. 32.

<sup>36</sup> Stephan T. Planken, “Balkans: UN Security Council Resolutions,” Online. Available <http://www.cybercom.nl/>

Herzegovina. By May 1992, the YPA began its withdrawal from Bosnia, leaving behind all troops of Bosnian origin. The Army also left a considerable amount of arms and ammunitions in the hands of the Karadzic Serbs. Consequently, this coupled with the complete embargo on all deliveries of weapons and military equipment to Yugoslavia, imposed in September, 25th, 1991 by the UN Security Council Resolution 713, gave them the opportunity to seize control of about 70% of Bosnia's territory. In April 1993, after the decision of the Security Council to extend the ban on military flights over Bosnia to cover all flights that were not authorized by UNPROFOR and to authorize the member states to undertake all necessary measures to assure compliance with the ban, NATO started operation Deny Flight. The UN also declared six "Safe Areas" for Bosnian Muslims in the towns Sarajevo, Bihac, Tuzla, Zepa, Srebrenica, and Gorazde. These "Safe Areas" were established to provide shelter for Muslim refugees and also to partially stem their flow to the West. Nevertheless, the Bosnian Serbs continued to subject these areas to artillery and sniper fire. Another fact that complicated further the already complex dimensions of the conflict was the rejection of the Vance-Owen peace plan in May (for the third time) by the Bosnian Serb Parliament. This particular event has profoundly affected Belgrade's attitude towards the Bosnian Serbs, especially because the Serbian president Milosevic was in favor of the plan.<sup>37</sup> Also at that time Bosnian, Croat and Muslim troops began fighting each other in central Bosnia. By the late fall of 1993, the Bosnian governmental forces began making military gains over the Bosnian Croats.

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<sup>37</sup> James Gow, p.

The military effectiveness of the Bosnian Army slowly improved as a trickle of arms arrived in Bosnia, mainly from countries such as Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Iran with the tacit support of the United States.<sup>38</sup>

In February 1994 the Western action in Bosnia increased. In response to a devastating mortar attack on a Sarajevo marketplace, where 68 people were killed and over 200 were wounded, NATO demanded the withdrawal of all Serb artillery from around Sarajevo. The decision was that if by February 10th, heavy weapons were not removed from a 20 kilometer exclusive zone around Sarajevo or turned over to UN control, such sites would be subject to NATO air strikes.<sup>39</sup> These air strikes would be conducted in close coordination with the UN Secretary General. The efforts of NATO and the UN achieved the desired results and the heavy weapons were withdrawn from around the city or placed under UN control. It should be pointed out here that Russia played a special role in negotiating the withdrawal with the Bosnian Serbs. Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic was quoted by France Press saying that he was bowing to pressure from Russia to respect UN and NATO demand.<sup>40</sup> On the other hand Russia conceded on placing 800 of its peacekeeping troops in the region of Sarajevo. Later that month 28th, NATO jets shot down four Bosnian Serb's aircraft violating the no-fly zone.

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<sup>38</sup> Ralph Begleiter, "Weapons Flowing to Bosnia in Violation of UN Embargo," *CNN, Show: News* 3:11 pm ET, June 7, 1994. Online. LEXIS-NEXIS. Also *Deutsche Presse-Agentur*, "U.S. Tacitly Allows Iran to Supply Weapons to Bosnian Muslims," April 14, 1995. Online. LEXIS-NEXIS.

<sup>39</sup> Stephen T. Planken, "Balkans: Chronology of Key Events. Part I: UNPROFOR in Yugoslavia (June 25, 1991-December 20, 1995)," Online. Available <http://www.cybercom.nl/>

<sup>40</sup> *Agence France Presse*, "Serb 'Withdrawal' Said to be Limited to 15 Trucks," February 18, 1994, 06:17 ET. Online. LEXIS-NEXIS.



On March 1st, the Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Muslims agreed on the establishment of a Muslim-Croat federation in Bosnia. This agreement was brokered by the US and backed by Croatia's President Tudjman.<sup>41</sup> The agreement received Tudjman's support because it recognized the right of the Bosnian Croats in the federation to confederate with Croatia.<sup>42</sup> Also, this agreement has been reached in the hope that a new Muslim-Croat union in Bosnia could become strong enough to deal with the Bosnian Serbs and win the necessary concessions from them to negotiate peace. The result would be the establishment of just two geographical entities, one Muslim-Croat, the other Serb, instead of three as all previous peace proposals by the international community have been made (Lord Carington's in March 1992, Vance-Owen's in August 1992, Owen-Stoltenberg's in 1993).

At the end of 1994, the Bosnian Serbs agreed to a four month cease-fire after a meeting with the former US president Jimmy Carter. This meeting had been initiated by the Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic in August, the same year.<sup>43</sup> It was widely believed that the invitation of the former US president to mediate in the conflict settlement had been sought by the Bosnian Serbs in order to break up the international isolation in which they had been since their refusal to accept the Contact Group peace plan and especially the territorial division envisaged in it. At the same time, the former

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<sup>41</sup> Saul Friedman, "Peace Push; Croats, Muslims Coming to D.C. for Bosnia Talks," *Newsday*, February 25, 1994, p. 3. Online. LEXIS-NEXIS.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>43</sup> Lou Water, interview with Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, "Karadzic Calls Jimmy Carter to Push Peace Process," *CNN, Show: News* 1:47 p.m. ET, August 29, 1995. Online. LEXIS-NEXIS.

Russian prime-minister Yegor Gaidar was also invited by Radovan Karadzic with the same mission as a representative of another key member of the Contact Group--Russia. This was also seen as an additional step by the Bosnian Serbs in the same direction.<sup>44</sup> The parties to the conflict agreed to the cease-fire but the difference in their opinions about the territorial division of Bosnia and the Contact Group Peace plan as a whole still remained.

On May 1st, the cease-fire ended and fighting escalated in Bosnia. This led to escalation of NATO's air campaign against the Bosnian Serbs. In response, the Serbs took UN troops as hostages and used them as a human shield against the air strikes. These hostages were all eventually released.<sup>45</sup> On July 11th, the Serbs overran the UN Safe Area of Srebrenica. This was followed by mass execution of thousands of military age Muslim men. The town of Zepa, another UN Safe Area, was also taken. In his report, the special investigator for the UN on human rights in ex-Yugoslavia, Tadeusz Mazowiecki wrote "The fall of Srebrenica and Zepa brought tragedy, loss of life and serious human rights violations to the inhabitants of those areas. At the same time it seriously undermined the credibility of the Security Council, the Secretary-General and the whole United Nations system."<sup>46</sup> NATO's response to the atrocities committed by the Bosnian Serbs was another increase of the air strikes campaign against them. However, there was considerable controversy over the fall of the Safe Areas and the conduct of the air strikes.

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<sup>44</sup> Andrei Smirnov, "Gaidar Seeks to Take Over Bridgehead Gained by Carter," *Kommersant*, December 22, 1994, p. 4. Online. LEXIS-NEXIS.

<sup>45</sup> *The Reuter European Community Report*, "All UN Bosnia Hostages to be Freed Today-Chirac," June 17, 1995. Online. LEXIS-NEXIS.

<sup>46</sup> *Deutsche Presse-Agentur*, "UN Report Supports Claims of Mass Executions at Srebrenica," August 23, 1995, 11:11 Central European Time. Online. LEXIS-NEXIS.



There have been many press reports that the Western countries knew that the areas would fall to the Serbs but did not undertake any action to prevent that. This resulted also in Tadeusz Mazowiecki's resignation from his position as a protest at the United Nations' failure to prevent the capture of these areas.<sup>47</sup>

The Croatian Army launched an offensive against the Krajina Serbs in August 1995 following their initial success in May in Western Slavonia the same year. At that time Milosevic abandoned the Croatian Serbs and offered them no support. The whole area of Krajina was cleared out. There were many reports that the Croatian forces have been engaged in policies of "ethnic cleansing" sending almost 200,000 Serbs fleeing into Bosnia.<sup>48</sup> The success of this offensive shifted the balance of power in the region away from the Serbs. Also, it eliminated the basis for support that the Bosnian Serbs have had in the face of their Slavic brothers from the Krajina region. This made significant military reversals in Bosnia seem more possible. Another important lesson for the Bosnian Serbs and their political leaders was the example of the kind of fate that awaited them if they fall out of favor in Belgrade.

Nevertheless, a split between the two political leaders, Milosevic of the Serbs and Karadzic of the Bosnian Serbs, had developed. The first signs of it appeared in 1993 when Karadzic defied his former ally by refusing to sign the Vance-Owen peace plan of which Milosevic was for various reasons in favor. Furthermore, the split has been

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> *Reuters World Service*, "Croats Guilty of Ethnic Cleansing, Carter Says," citing an interview with the former U.S. President J. Carter for Channel Four News in which he also accuses Washington in tacit support of Croatia's move to retrieve Krajina from rebel Serbs, August 11, 1995. Online. LEXIS-NEXIS.

widened by the decision of the Bosnian Serb leader to re-establish old links with Vojislav Seselj, an extreme nationalist and Milosevic's rival in Belgrade.<sup>49</sup>

There were many reasons that made the Serbian president Milosevic more amenable to a peace settlement during that time. Serbia had been suffering greatly under the UN economic sanctions that were imposed in May 1992. They exacerbated the already ongoing economic crisis from before the war. Milosevic also knew that time was not in favor of the Serbs. They had been successful at the beginning of the war due to their superiority in arms which they inherited from the YPA and the division in the international community peace efforts. Milosevic knew that this advantages would not last long. That was why he tried to persuade the Bosnian Serb leader Karadzic to sign the Vance-Owen peace plan, which he felt was the best deal possible for the Serbs. Milosevic also knew that if he negotiate the peace settlement personally he would gain political dividends from it, and would be able to re-assert his leadership over the Serb people. That was why he cut his ties with the Bosnian Serbs, imposed a blockade on them, and invited UN observers to monitor it. All these, coupled with the cohesion which was brought to the international community peace effort by the formation of the Contact Group in London in April 1994 led to the negotiated by the US cease-fire in October 1995 and cleared the way for the Dayton Agreement the following November.

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<sup>49</sup> Ian Traynor, "Bosnian Serbs Undermine Milosevic," *The Guardian (London)*, August 30, 1994. p. 7. Online. LEXIS-NEXIS. Also Eve-Ann Prentice, "MPs Back Karadzic Against Mladic," *The Times*, August 7, 1995. Section: Overseas New. Online. LEXIS-NEXIS.

The Agreement called for a zone of separation to be set up between the Muslim-Croat Federation and the Serb Republic. This zone was to be enforced by troops from NATO's led Implementation Force (IFOR). NATO was given a mandate by the UN Security Council to implement the military aspects of the Agreement. The vote of the Security Council, in which Russia has permanent seat and veto power, assured international legitimacy for the Implementation Force. IFOR started operation Joint Endeavor on December 16th, 1995.



### **III. THE RUSSIAN INVOLVEMENT IN THE INTERNATIONAL PEACE EFFORT**

Under the strains of ethno-nationalism, Yugoslavia began fragmenting as communist rule receded in Eastern Europe. The impact of the rising nationalist currents did not become evident until after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Even before Slovenia and Croatia declared independence from Yugoslavia in 1991, and were recognized by the European Union, discord had turned into fierce fighting among the ethnic communities. The Serbs in Bosnia and Croatia, backed by Serbian president Slobodan Milosevic, began the bloodiest fighting in Europe since World War II. They fought to break up Bosnia and Croatia, establish an independent Serb republics, and unite them with Milosevic's Serbian state to form a "Greater Serbia." The Serbs initiated "ethnic cleansing" but in turn fell victim to this practice as Croatia employed it to gain territory.

As the slaughter of Muslims mounted in Sarajevo and other Bosnian enclaves in 1992, the American administration came under heavy criticism for inaction. At the same time the Russian administration also abstained from the conflict and voices were raised within Russia to take action to resolve the problem. With the end of the Cold War, both the United States and Russia found themselves in a position to use force more selectively and with less risk. Neither felt compelled to intervene to secure a competitive ideological advantage. Moreover, both Russia and the United States have their important role in the European security system.



Despite these similarities, however, the differences in the post-Cold War decision-making processes regarding the formulation of national interests and foreign policy objectives in the two countries are more striking. While the U.S. in the early 1990s was re-evaluating its defense and security priorities, in Russia this process was coupled with profound transition which affected every aspect of its political, social, and economic life. First, Russia had to build entirely new, administrative and political institutions. Second, it had to accept that the demise of both the Soviet Union and its Communist Party opened the political decision making process to a constantly widening group of participants ministers, deputies, think tanks, the media, and the public. In this regard the reformists had to fight against what Russian foreign minister Kozyrev termed a “siege mentality.”<sup>50</sup> Third, these adjustments to the new rules had to take place simultaneously with a radical economic reform which caused widespread hardship in the country. And finally, the dissolution of what used to be a single country to its constituent states produced relations among them that had still not crystallized.

The policy of Russia towards war in the former Yugoslavia went through different phases according to three criteria: the level of cooperation with the Western countries and the U.S.; the level of tension in the Russian Federation; and the involvement of the international community in the crisis. In 1991, when the disintegration of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia took place, Russia abstained from the conflict. In the

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<sup>50</sup> Jan S. Adams, “Legislature Asserts Its Role in Russian Foreign Policy,” *RFE/RL Research Report*, Vol. 2, no. 4, January 22, 1993, p. 36.



middle of 1992 Russia gradually increased its insistence to participate in conflict resolution not only through the UN Security Council. Then, in 1993 the Russian diplomacy tried to facilitate the implementation of Vance-Owen Peace Plan and Russia gradually increased its involvement in the international efforts at resolution. The years of 1994 and 1995 could be seen as another phase of Russia's policy towards the crisis. This phase was marked by the gradual increase of the United States involvement in the international community's peace effort. This brought not only cohesion but at the same time, by assuming the leading role in it the US, in a sense, marginalized Russia's position.

At first, the attempt to reform the USSR determined Gorbachev's approach to the Yugoslav crisis. While in power, Gorbachev has achieved two epochal successes, and has suffered two painful failures in his domestic policy. He almost completely dismantled the Stalinist totalitarian system, and withdrew the Soviet Union from superpower confrontation, in both cases without the use of force. But his successes contained the seeds of failure. They produced the near-paralysis of the Soviet economy, and they triggered the rapid dissolution of the Soviet Union into its constituent national elements. This domestic situation determined Gorbachev's support for the Yugoslav forces trying to keep the country united by any means. Another reason for regarding the break up of Yugoslavia as dangerous was that "it might lead to international intervention to prevent

bloodshed and thus set a precedent that could bode ill for the Soviet Union itself.”<sup>51</sup> Thus, Moscow responded negatively to the June 25th Slovenian and Croatian declarations of independence.

Initially, it appeared that Moscow and Washington would act together to try to preserve Yugoslav unity.<sup>52</sup> The Bush administration considered the possibility that Yugoslav policy might have negative implications for internal and external Soviet policy. Encouraging ethnic division in Yugoslavia might encourage it in the USSR, something President Bush greatly feared at the outset of the crisis. The United States viewed the preservation of both the USSR and the Yugoslav federation as vital for the international stability in Europe.<sup>53</sup> Despite all these concerns, the U.S. showed little inclination to get deeply involved in the resolution of the Yugoslav crisis and was prepared to allow the European Community to take the leading role in this endeavor.

Moscow tried to act in coordination with the international community in its effort for peaceful resolution of the Balkan conflict. Initially reluctant to agree, it later supported the participation of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), especially after Yugoslavia itself accepted the plan.<sup>54</sup>

At that time Gorbachev's leadership was approaching its demise. In order to raise his domestic prestige he invited Slobodan Milosevic and Franjo Tudjman to Moscow in

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<sup>51</sup> Suzanne Crow, "Soviet Reaction to the Crisis in Yugoslavia," *RFE/RL Report on the USSR*, August 2, 1991, p. 9.

<sup>52</sup> Alan Elsner, "U.S. No Longer Believes Old Yugoslavia Can Be Salvaged," *Reuters News Service-United States*, August 14, 1991. Online. LEXIS-NEXIS.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Suzanne Crow, "Soviet Reaction to the Crisis in Yugoslavia," p. 10.

October 1991 to facilitate the peace negotiations. That meeting ended with the acceptance of a joint communiqué without any practical results. Both Balkan leaders accepted goodwill missions of the international community, particularly the USSR and the U.S.<sup>55</sup> In December Gorbachev announced his resignation.

The approach of Yeltsin towards the Yugoslav crisis was not explicit. The Russian leader simply had no time or energy to follow events there. The Russian political elite as a whole was totally occupied with the problems of its own survival and developments within the USSR. During the spring and summer of 1991 Yeltsin and his followers were preoccupied with the presidential campaign.

In December, the leaders of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus concluded the Belovezh Agreement abolishing the USSR and establishing the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), followed by the signing of the CIS Treaty in Alma-Ata on December 21st.<sup>56</sup> These rapid domestic changes governed USSR's and Russia's approaches towards the Balkan crisis in 1991, and to a large degree provided sufficient explanation for the low profile which was adopted at the beginning of the crisis.

In 1992 Russian's relations with the rest of the world were governed by different features. That was the "era of romantic engagement" for Russia and the developed industrial states.<sup>57</sup> Thus the domestic post-communist transformation in Russia seemed

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<sup>55</sup> BBC, "Joint Communiqué at Meeting With Gorbachev," October 17, 1991. Online. LEXIS-NEXIS.

<sup>56</sup> John Lloyd and Gillian Tett, "Russia Tightens Grip as Republics Seal Joint Pact," *Financial Times*, December 23, 1991. Online. LEXIS-NEXIS.

<sup>57</sup> Ariel Cohen, "A New Paradigm for US-Russian Relationship: Facing the Post-Cold Reality," *Backgrounders*, (The Heritage Foundation), No. 1105, March 6, 1997. Online. Available <http://www.abb.org/heritage/insiderussia/pubs.html>.

likely to take place in a friendly environment with the expectation of economic, institutional, and expert assistance. There was also evident the desire of the new authorities to receive recognition as successor to the USSR in world politics and to demonstrate more liberal approach to international affairs than the Gorbachev's team. Yeltsin's domestic as well as foreign policies were clearly oriented towards meeting the standards of the West.<sup>58</sup>

The Russian approach to the Yugoslav crisis, therefore, did not differ much from the rough consensus reached by the Western countries on how to respond to the conflict in the first half of 1992. At the same time Russia did not want to lose influence in Serbia. The Russian authorities decided to apply an interesting crisis solution formula--they would respect the choice of the secessionist republics, and of those who wanted to stay in Yugoslavia. This formula helped Yeltsin to disarm his opponents, who were arguing against the pro-Western orientation of Russia's foreign and domestic policies, and were accusing him of what they viewed as an anti-Serbian stance.<sup>59</sup>

At that time Serbia had suspended its bombing of civilian targets and accepted UN peacekeeping troops in certain areas of Croatia. This allowed Russia to emphasize that it was worried by the tendency of the international community to isolate the "traditional friend of Moscow," the Serbian nation, using religious dogmas and

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<sup>58</sup> John Roper and Peter van Ham, "Redefining Russia's Role in Europe," in Vladimir Baranovsky eds., *Russia and Europe: The Emerging Security Agenda*, (Oxford University Press, Inc., New York, 1997), p. 504.

<sup>59</sup> Suzanne Crow, "Russia Adopts a More Active Policy," *RFE/RL Research Report*, Vol. 2, no. 12, March 19, 1993, p. 3.



ideology.<sup>60</sup> The uneasy balance was between attempting to act in accordance with Western pressure on the Serbs, and avoiding an excessively dependent pro-Western policy towards the conflict.

In May 1992, Russia made its first decisive step in support of the international effort to resolve the crisis when its representative to the UN Security Council voted to support sanctions on Serbia. The decision to support the sanctions which followed the unsuccessful peace mission of Russia's foreign minister Kozyrev in former Yugoslavia, resulted in a parliamentary uproar in Russia. The conservative deputies argued that this decision had been illadvised and taken without consultation between the parliament and the foreign ministry. So the Supreme Soviet demanded a moratorium on the UN sanctions against Serbia and called for the international community to exert pressure on all Bosnian contending parties to end the fighting.<sup>61</sup> Also, the Russian foreign policy executives were accused of following blindly the Western approach towards the conflict.<sup>62</sup>

During this period the domestic power struggle in Russia between the executive and legislative powers was at its height. 1992 was marked by a radical reform of the Russian economy in the direction of Western free market rules. The reconstruction of Russian society on the basis of democracy and a market economy was seen by the reformists in the government as crucial. But the implementation of this policy required

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<sup>60</sup> Stephen Larrabee, "Russia and the Balkans: Old Themes and New Challenges," in Vladimir Baranovsky eds., *Russia and Europe: The Emerging Security Agenda*, pp. 393-394.

<sup>61</sup> Suzanne Crow, "Russia's Response to the Yugoslav Crisis," *RFE/RL Research Report*, V. 1, no. 30, July 24, 1992, p.31.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

imposition of strict and unpopular monetary programs. The result was widespread economic hardship. President Yeltsin was initially supportive of this policy but when this reformist perspective became a subject of increasing criticism by his political opponents and anti-reform conservatives in the parliament, he shifted his position and tried to moderate the speed of the reforms. A decisive step towards this new course of moderation was the replacement in December 1992 of the pro-reform Prime Minister Egor Gaidar under considerable pressure from the parliament.<sup>63</sup> Consequently, the Western institutions, which were ready to invest and secure loans for Russia, became alarmed after the shift towards more conservative and anti-reform domestic policies and withheld their proposals. The realization that large scale Western economic assistance would not be easily forthcoming weakened further the rationale for Yeltsin's strategy of building good relations with the West and integrating Russia into the Western community of nations.

As a consequence, Russia remained the only actor not recognizing the Serbian leadership and its proxies as inspirators of the conflict in former Yugoslavia. By using its status as a permanent member of the UN Security Council Russia insisted on a political solution of the crisis and opposed any kind of military intervention though the persistence of fighting had already given rise to such discussions. At that moment the UN had peacekeeping forces on duty in former Yugoslavia including nine hundred Russians.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Alexander Rahr, "The Future of Russian Reform," *RFE/RL Research Report*, Vol. 3, no. 5, February 4, 1994, p. 7.

<sup>64</sup> Suzanne Crow, "Russia's Response to the Yugoslav Crisis," p. 35.



The general pattern of Russian foreign policy in 1993 was greatly influenced by the still ongoing power struggle between the executive, reformist, and the legislative, conservative, powers. The stress was put on the necessity of reorientation of the “pro-Western shift” in Russia’s international policy and the clear definition of its foreign policy objectives.<sup>65</sup> At the beginning of 1993 Russia “explicitly downgraded relations with the West (and with the United States, in particular) as a foreign policy priority.”<sup>66</sup> This orientation had been explicitly expressed by the Russian President Boris Yeltsin in January 1993 when he commented on the new trends of Russia’s foreign policy by saying “we are moving away from the Western emphasis” and justified this shift by stating that “the United States has a certain tendency to dictate its own terms.”<sup>67</sup>

Russia’s policy towards the Balkans conflict thus became more assertive and active. Moscow insisted on a political solution of the crisis, and initiated its own proposals for a settlement in the region. This peace proposal became known as the “eight point plan.” It was introduced in February 1993 and called for a halt to all fighting in Bosnia and Croatia, adoption of the Vance-Owen peace plan for division of Bosnia into ten autonomous regions, the lifting of sanctions against Serbia if it accepted the plan, and the introduction of multinational UN-sponsored forces to help with implementation. Moscow also proposed to send its own contingent and agreed to the use of NATO power

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<sup>65</sup> Jan S. Adams, “Legislature Asserts Its Role in Russian Foreign Policy,” p. 35.

<sup>66</sup> Suzanne Crow, “Russia Adopts a More Active Policy,” p. 1.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 1, The author cites President Yeltsin’s statements from ITAR-TASS released on 25 and 30 January, 1993.

to support the operation. The plan also called for tightening the control over the arms embargo imposed on Bosnia and investigation of alleged war crimes.<sup>68</sup>

There could be found many reasons for this greater assertiveness and consistence of Russia's stance in regard to the Balkan conflict. Conservatives from the Russian parliament were constantly insisting that Russia should adopt more sympathetic policies to Serbia and put the stress in their arguments on issues ranging from religion to economy. Another reason was the constant disagreement between the U.S. and its European allies which had weakened their consensus on the appropriate approaches of the West towards the conflict. Moreover, the conflict gave grounds to the conservatives in Russia to pursue their domestic and foreign policy goals more vigorously. In January 1993, Croatia launched an offensive against the Serbs but a cease fire was promptly reached.<sup>69</sup> Nevertheless, Russia insisted on imposing sanctions against Croatia, linking those sanctions with the easing or lifting the sanctions against Serbia. This intention was articulated by the deputy foreign minister Churkin when he explained that "the goal of Russian diplomacy was to ensure the cancellation of the sanctions against Belgrade, not the introduction of new ones against Zagreb."<sup>70</sup>

The greater assertiveness in Russia's foreign policy as a whole was dictated largely by "the shift in the domestic center of gravity in Russia in a more nationalistic

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<sup>68</sup> Suzanne Crow, "Russia Adopts a More Active Policy," p. 4.

<sup>69</sup> For a full discussion of this see Patrick Moore, "War Returns to Croatia," *RFE/RL Research Report*, no. 9, February 26, 1993.

<sup>70</sup> Suzanne Crow, "Russia Adopts a More Active Policy," p. 3.

direction.”<sup>71</sup> This shift found its expression in various ways ranging from arguments for clear definition of the Russian national interest to anti-Western sentiments surfacing in both the public mood and political debates. Also, the relations with Russia’s “near abroad” became paramount and the stability and security of these regions were increasingly seen as Russia’s sole responsibility.<sup>72</sup> A more fundamental explanation of this shift could be found in Russia’s deteriorating economic and social situation and the growing unpopularity with the results of the reforms. Thus the political leadership became more vulnerable to the increasing pressure of the nationalists sentiments expressed not only by parliamentary members but by continuously widening group of the population.

In March 1993, the Eight Congress of People’s Deputies convened in Moscow. The Congress stripped Yeltsin of the emergency powers to rule by decree which were granted to him in 1991. Nevertheless, in April Yeltsin and his government won a referendum on confidence. This could be interpreted as a sign that the Russian population was supportive of the new moderate speed of the economic reform, but the tensions of the political power struggle did not subside. These tensions escalated to such a degree that the government and the congress found themselves in a deadlock. At the end of September the president signed a decree disbanding the Supreme Soviet and Congress of

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<sup>71</sup> Stephen Larrabee, “Russia and the Balkans: Old Themes and New Challenges,” in Vladimir Baranovsky eds., *Russia and Europe: The Emerging Security Agenda*, p. 395.

<sup>72</sup> Suzanne Crow, “Russia Asserts Its Strategic Agenda,” *RFE/RL Research Report*, Vol. 2, no. 50, December 17, 1993, p. 2. The author cites the Russian President’s address to the members of the Civic Union coalition quoted by ITAR-TASS on March 1st, 1993.

Peoples Deputies and calling for new elections. The reaction of the conservative legislators was rebellious. The deputies, on their part, voted to impeach the President on a charge of attempted coup d'état. The armed forces of the Supreme Soviet attempted to occupy the Moscow Mayor's office and the Ostankino television. Troops loyal to the president captured the parliament building by force and arrested the resistance organizers.

In December the new federal constitution was approved by a referendum which took place simultaneously with parliamentary elections. Though the majority of the seats in the lower chamber of the parliament (the State Duma) went to anti-reform blocs and parties, the prospects for the legislature to have any significant influence on the foreign policy formulation were considerably lessened by the new constitution. The provisions of the constitution strengthen the presidential power and lessened the voice of the Duma on the formation of the government, the control of the budget, and the shaping of Russia's foreign policy. The failure of the pro-reformers and the success of the conservative and nationalist parties in the elections were interpreted by President Yeltsin as a "popular protest against radical reform."<sup>73</sup> So he appointed Viktor Chernomyrdin as a Prime Minister and entrusted him with adopting a less radical reform policy.

The main objective of the Russian policy towards the conflict in former Yugoslavia during the period of 1994-1995 was to avoid political marginalization by letting the Western countries, including the U.S., broker their peace solution using NATO forces. In a broader context, Russia was afraid that it might find itself deprived of a major

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<sup>73</sup> Alexander Rahr, "The Future of Russian Reform," p. 10.



role in the creation of a new post-Cold War security order in Europe. For this reason Russia constantly insisted that organizations such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and UN should be at the center of the new European security order. At the same time, the constant and increasing opposition to the use of NATO-led forces was used by the Russian ruling elite to appease its political opponents at home.

These were the major concerns of Moscow when it criticized Washington for not keeping it informed of the NATO decision to bomb Bosnian Serbs positions in response to a grave mortar attack on a Sarajevo marketplace in February 1994.<sup>74</sup> Later the foreign minister Kozyrev pointed out that “NATO’s ultimatum was imposed without Russia” and stressed the impossibility of Russia’s exclusion from common attempts to regulate the Bosnian problem.<sup>75</sup> Finally, Russian peacekeeping troops were deployed around Sarajevo following the negotiated deal with the Serbs to withdraw their heavy weapons from the exclusive zone around the town. This gave Russia an opportunity, by exploiting the “historic” Slav and Orthodox bonds with the Serbs, to be able to persuade them to comply with the NATO ultimatum. While some argue that by this unilateral act Russia had scored “a clear diplomatic triumph”<sup>76</sup> it was another effort in compliance with the Western positions and policies towards conflict resolution. At that time Yeltsin’s

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<sup>74</sup> Stan Markotich, “Former Communist States Respond to NATO Ultimatum,” *RFE/RL Research Report*, V. 3, no. 8, February 25, 1994, p. 6.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>76</sup> Stephen Larrabee, “Russia and the Balkans: Old Themes and New Challenges,” in Vladimir Baranovsky eds., *Russia and Europe: The Emerging Security Agenda*, p. 396.



administration emphasized to the West the necessity of cooperation for resolving the Bosnian conflict, but stayed firm on its positions for opposing to any military activities against the Bosnian Serbs realizing that only NATO had the necessary military capability and political will for such peacemaking mission.

A substantive step towards peace in Bosnia was made in March 1994 with the formation of the U.S.-brokered Croat-Muslim Federation. At the same time, more cohesion was brought to the peace efforts of the international community with the establishment of the Contact Group in April 1994 which included Britain, France, Germany, Russia, and the U.S. The first proposal of the Contact Group for division of Bosnia into two parts: 51% for the Croat-Muslim Federation and 49% for the Bosnian Serbs, was rejected by the Bosnian Serbs as they still controlled roughly 70% of the Bosnian territory.

At this time signs of a rift between Belgrade and Pale were beginning to surface. The possibilities for Milosevic to influence Karadzic had reduced significantly. Belgrade showed signs of returning to the path of cooperation with the international community. Russia also became more cooperative. It agreed to NATO air strikes once an agreement was reached that they were going to be carried out under the auspices of the UN, where Russia had a voice and veto power as a permanent member of the Security Council. After some hesitation, it also accepted the Washington plan for a Muslim-Croatian federation.

However, since late 1994 when the U.S. became fully involved in the peace effort, Russia found itself increasingly excluded from it. Moscow played virtually no role in the

drawing up of the Dayton Agreement and participated in the NATO-led forces which were going to implement the decisions simply because it had to be there.

At the conclusion of the Dayton Agreement, NATO replaced the United Nations in Bosnia with the launching of operation Joint Endeavor. Sixty thousand-strong NATO Implementation Force (IFOR) started its deployment in December 1995 in the northeast part of Bosnia around Tuzla. For the first time in military history, a Russian air-borne brigade became a part of the NATO-led Implementation Force. The operation of the Russian troops within the framework of IFOR's command and control structure has been estimated as very successful. "The Russian Brigade, one of five TF maneuver brigades, operates smoothly and seamlessly with its U.S. headquarters and multinational sister units. This success was not an accident: it is a result of careful planning, a common strategic objective and unparalleled professionalism."<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Major Charles J. McLaughlin, U.S. Army, "U.S.-Russian Cooperation in IFOR: Partners for Peace," *Military Review*, No. 4, July-August 1997, pp. 130-131.



#### IV. THE DAYTON ACCORDS

The Dayton Peace Agreement divided Bosnia in two roughly equal parts: 51% for the Bosnian Federation, and 49% for the Serb Republic. The capital Sarajevo was to be re-united, under predominantly Muslim control. The Agreement also has provisions for arms control, free elections, and creating a new constitution.

The agreement called for a zone of separation to be set up between the Muslim-Croat Federation and the Serb Republic. This zone was to be enforced by troops from NATO's Implementation Force (IFOR). IFOR was a multi-national force, almost 60,000 strong, consisting of NATO and non-NATO troops. Russian forces joined the Implementation Force in January 1996. Russia's participation in IFOR was subject to a special arrangements between NATO and Russia. The Russian troops were directly subordinated to Col. General Leontiy Shevtsov who was General Joulwan's Russian deputy. In this way they were not directly subordinated to a NATO commander but rather to an U.S. general. Following the signing of the Bosnian Peace Agreement in Paris on 14th December 1995, NATO was given a mandate by the UN Security Council to implement the military aspects of the Agreement. The vote of the Security Council, in which Russia has permanent seat and veto power, assured international legitimacy for the Implementation Force and Russia's participation in it. IFOR started Operation Joint Endeavor on December 16th, 1995.

In contrast to UNPROFOR, IFOR troops were more heavily armed. They also had much more discretion in the use of force for the purposes of self defense. Another provision called for the Bosnian factions to assist IFOR in the location of all mines in Bosnia. The IFOR troops were to stay in the region for one year, after which they were to be replaced by a Stabilization Force (SFOR). SFOR was a follow-on peacekeeping force similar in composition to IFOR, but half its size. SFOR was still to be extensively covered by NATO air force and was still larger and better armed than UNPROFOR.

All parties to the conflict were supposed to exchange all Prisoners of War (POW) and a deadline was stipulated in the Dayton Agreement. Also, all foreign troops were to leave the country. There was also a stipulation allowing free movement of people within the country, and all refugees were to be permitted to return to their homes.

Arms control was an essential aspect of the Dayton Agreement, preventing the renewal of hostilities. By reducing the overall level of arms in the region and establishing a parity between all the parties, the Agreement tried to establish a lasting peace.

In its essence the Dayton Peace Agreement was not substantively different from some of the previous peace proposals. It effectively divided Bosnia in ethnic cantons governed in a loose confederation, but it was accepted for a number of reasons.

First, the Serbian President, Slobodan Milosevic, was at that time ready to make a deal. In fact, he had been ready to negotiate a peace agreement since the Vance-Owen peace plan had been introduced. The failure of this plan had weakened his position as a self-proclaimed leader of all Serbs and opened a rift between himself and the Bosnian



Serbs leadership. Milosevic knew that time was a crucial factor in war and that it was against the Serbs as their situation was growing steadily worse. Furthermore, by negotiating the settlement personally, he could re-assert his leadership over the Serb people.

Another factor was the overwhelming success of the Croatian August 1995 offensive against the Croatian Serbs in the Krajina region. This victory changed the balance of power in the former Yugoslavia, by demonstrating Croat military power and cutting off support for the Bosnian Serbs from the Republic of Krajina. This made significant military reversals in Bosnia seem more possible and determined the success of the Bosnian Army. These and the subsequent NATO air action proved to be a major turning point in the war.

A decisive factor turned out to be the cohesion of effort that was reached with the establishment of the Contact Group and the consensus among the international powers that a new strategy, including military force, was needed in Bosnia. Moreover, the cohesion and decisiveness was assured by the full U.S. involvement in this effort.

The U.S. became involved in peacekeeping and negotiating efforts in Bosnia gradually. When the American administration decided to get involved it did it decisively with sound proposals backed by the necessary resources. The Bosnian Muslim-Croat Federation was brokered under U.S. auspices, and made possible after significant pressure was applied to the Croatian government. The cease-fire and Dayton negotiations were arranged by the tireless shuttle diplomacy of the U.S. envoy Richard Holbrooke.

On the other hand, the U.S. involvement in the Bosnian peace effort was so important because of the unique place in which America found itself in the post-Cold War political and geostrategical environment as a sole leader in world affairs. Thus the European security problems appear to be American security problems as well. This is also a consequence of the fact that the U.S. plays the leading role in NATO alliance. Given that NATO has a virtual monopoly on force in Europe, the failure to effectively deal with the war in former Yugoslavia could undermine its credibility and mission. So, the maintenance of NATO is essential to keeping an American military presence in Europe and thus an American voice in European security issues.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

International involvement in the former Yugoslavia has been marked by considerable confusion and inconsistency. This reflects in the lack of will of the international community to take the necessary steps to address the underlying causes of the conflict. The inconsistency of the international involvement in the conflict was also evident from the significant disagreements between the actors on which goal should have had the priority: containment of the conflict, delivery of humanitarian aid to the suffering people, or punishing the aggressor. The hesitation over these issues appears to be one of the major causes that helped to postpone the cessation of hostilities and restoration of peace in Bosnia.

These differences were also the characteristic features of the U.S.-Russian interaction. While both countries, acting in accord or unilaterally, directed their efforts towards one and the same objective, to halt hostilities and restore peace, order, and stability in the region, they were in favour of different means and institutions with which to achieve it. Russia constantly opposed any decisive role by NATO in resolving the conflict. It also insisted on equal responsibility by all contending parties in the conflict, and consequently on enhanced use of the OSCE and UN capabilities as impartial peacekeepers. These guiding principles reflect Russia's lack of will to address the fundamental causes of the conflict, in other words to recognize that the war was a result of an organized program of domestic conflict waged along ethno-cultural lines by the

Serbian power elite. On the larger international scale, this policy reflects Moscow's concern over American influence spreading, through NATO, into Southeastern Europe, a region perceived by Russia as historically linked to it. At the same time, developments in the Balkans showed many Russians that parity between the U.S. and Russia no longer existed, and confirmed the diminishing political power of Russia on the international scene and the increasingly powerful position of the Americans. The profound national identity crisis, which was brought about by the collapse of the Soviet Union, resulted in Russians becoming more and more nostalgic for the Soviet past when their country was, at least in their eyes, more powerful and wealthy. This rise of the nationalist sentiment came as a response to the political and economic challenges Russian society faced, which were reflected in Russia's foreign policy in general, and toward the Bosnian conflict in particular.

On the other hand, when the American administration involved itself fully in the conflict resolution effort, it did it with decisive determination to succeed, employing clear strategic goals and linking diplomacy and enforcement. In this way the major cause for the failure of the negotiations over Bosnia, which was the lack of credible threat of force to impose a settlement, was overcome.<sup>78</sup> This was done by the unique partnership between the UN and NATO. The former afforded legitimacy to international action, but lacked military resources to ensure success. The latter possessed significant military force, but lacked legitimacy outside its original framework. This partnership was not

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<sup>78</sup> The International Commission on the Balkans, p. 74

achieved without difficulties due to the different, almost opposing, philosophies, institutional cultures, and procedures of the two organizations. By reconciling those differences the U.S. asserted its position as a leading actor in world affairs in general and as the real power broker in the Balkans in particular.

Therefore, the impediments which were encountered at the beginning of the U.S.-Russian military cooperation in IFOR were rooted in Russia's domestic political and economic constraints. The special arrangements which were made for the Russian troops to participate in the NATO-led mission were due to the understanding of those domestic political constraints and the will of the U.S. administration not to exclude or ostracize Russia from the international political scene. On the other hand, it has been widely recognized that relations with the Russian troops in IFOR have been excellent and this has made the American military optimistic about the potential for U.S.-Russian future joint peacekeeping operations.<sup>79</sup> The political strains did not prevent these two countries from successfully addressing regional conflicts to enhance global security and stability. However, given the current political, economic, and social situation in Russia, similar political strains in the U.S.-Russian future military cooperation and interaction are likely to persist, and a lot of good will and effort from both sides will be needed to sustain mutual confidence and consensus building.

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<sup>79</sup> Major Charles J. McLaughlin, pp. 129-131; Tim Weiner, "Out of the Cold: U.S. and Russian Spies Share Cloaks in Bosnia," *The New York Times*, January 19, 1996, p. 6; General George A. Joulwan, "When Ivan Meets GI Joe," *The Washington Post*, April 28, 1996, p. C3.





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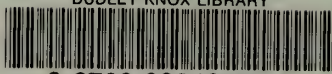
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